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BACKGROUND
MATERIAL

NARCOTICS

I. President Zia is the first Pakistani ruler to make a serious effort to deal with narcotics.

A. His predecessors were reluctant to stir up trouble in the North-West Frontier Province, where all of Pakistan's opium is grown.

B. Zia is motivated primarily by a belief that narcotics are contrary to Islam.

II. Opium production has fallen to about 100 tons a year from an all time high of about 800 tons in 1979.

A. Production has been almost completely eliminated in areas where the government has fairly firm control.

B. Raids on opium dealers and interceptions of shipments have increased dramatically in the past few years.

C. Another major reason for the decline in production, however, is the drastic fall in prices paid to farmers.

-- This is the result of such things as overproduction in past years and greater difficulty in exporting opium because of the situations in Iran and Afghanistan.

III. Pakistan nevertheless remains among the major producers of illicit narcotics.

A. The government has not yet made a serious effort to deal with production in the more remote tribal areas along the Afghan border.

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B. Ten years ago, most Pakistan opium was consumed in the region as opium; Iran was an important customer.

-- Now the Pakistanis are converting opium to heroin--
police seized 54 kilos in September.

-- The heroin is reaching Western Europe and the US.

IV. We lack firm evidence that the Afghan insurgents are selling opium to buy arms, but it is difficult to account in any other way for the money some tribes are spending.

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